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## AIR ROUTES OF THE SOVIET ARCTIC

### 1. Air Force of the GUMZ in Siberia

The air force of the GUMZ (Glavnoye Upravleniye Mest Zaklyucheniya: Main Administration of Places of Internment) ~~depends~~ is partly <sup>under</sup> ~~on~~ the GUMZ and partly <sup>under</sup> ~~on~~ the General Staff of the MVD special militia. This peculiar air force has to carry out various assignments, but its two major tasks can be easily discerned:

- a. Maintenance of order and security of the Great North deportation territories.
- b. Transportation of deported manpower in special, although frequent, cases.

In quite exceptional cases, the GUMZ air force also takes care of ~~the~~ supplies.

Soviets usually surround this air force with the most complete secrecy, and its principal centers are located in areas strictly forbidden to civilians and placed almost exclusively under the MVD control. Although incomplete, the information available at least gives an exact idea of what this independent air force was in summer of 1946.

The independent air force of the GUMZ has about one hundred German specialists, all used as experts.

There are approximately one thousand aircraft in Northern and Eastern Siberia, 75 percent of which are ultra-modern types. There are three types of aircraft:

- a. fighters and reconnaissance aircraft;
- b. bombers;
- c. large-capacity transport aircraft.

There are about 150 jet fighters of several new types. Of a total of 200 bombers, one half are prewar or from the first year of the war. The number of transport aircraft is estimated at 300, including 200 six- or four-engine flying cargoes of recent design.

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It appears therefore that fighters and reconnaissance craft reach a total of 400, and that there are very few old types.

Flying personnel are recruited from the NKVD/MVD members who served in the Air Forces, preferably in northern regions. With few exceptions, these personnel have clean records and by serving in the GUMZ independent air force are certain to obtain quick promotions in the MVD hierarchy. The non-flying personnel include, on the contrary, cadre members of the MVD serving disciplinary sentences in the North, a certain number of specialists serving sentences (or POW who served in the air forces in their countries), and ordinary convicts used as supervisors of political deportees.

There is no figure available for the total number of air fields. The names of nine GUMZ air fields and the location of 14 others are known. However, there must certainly be more than these 23, since a large number of Siberian deportation camps are located near air fields, and there are hundreds of such camps. It is true that very often the air fields of these camps are just makeshift fields without technical installation, fuel-tanks or adequate field lights.

A list of GUMZ air fields and some approximate locations follows:

- a. Tyutinsk-Samarova
- b. Tara
- c. Taymirsk
- d. Khatanga
- e. Kureyka near Igarka
- f. Nizhniy Kolymsk
- g. Ykutsk [sic] (special GUMZ air field)
- h. Magadan (administrative center of the GUMZ air force

for the Arctic)

- i. Kolyuchinsk

Approximate location of the 14 GUMZ air fields are:

- a. On the Kazym River, approximately 50 km from the Ob' River

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- b. On the Yal-Mal Isic, probably Yamal peninsula, on the southern shore of a lake at approximately 70 degrees north latitude and 70 degrees east longitude.
- c. On the Fur River, tributary of the Tar, about 200 km from the mouth.
- d. On the shore of Lake Kopidak (central Yenisey region).
- e. One hundred kilometers east of Dudinka probably Dudinka on the Northern Yenisey probably.
- f. At the confluence of the Kathanga and Moniero Khatanga and Moyera rivers.
- g. At the confluence of the Tunguska and the Taymura rivers.
- h. On the Anabar River, approximately 100 km from the Arctic Ocean.
- i. On the Lena River, approximately 50 km north of Schingansk Zhigansk.
- j. Near the sources of the Yana River, approximately 65 degrees north latitude (region of the Verkhoyansk mountain range).
- k. Approximately 30 km east of Sredne-Kolymsk.
- l. Approximately 100 km north of Markovo.
- m. At the head of Chaun Bay.
- n. On the Anguema River, at the easternmost point of the Arctic Ocean shore, about 50 km from the Ocean.

These are actual air bases, with technical installations and rather important fuel depots.

There is no information on the activity of the GUMZ air force, on the number of hours or distance flown. However, as an indication, it can be stated that in 1945 more than 50,000 political deportees were flown to their work by this air force. It is also known beyond any doubt that in 1944 during a rebellion a dozen of camps were destroyed by the air force in the region of Ta, on the Taymyr peninsula.

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At Tura the GUMZ shares the so-called commercial air field, which made it possible to observe there in early fall 1945, about 15 four-engine transport aircraft, 10 fighters, and two bombers. In addition to the letters SSSR all these aircraft were marked VKMZ.

### 2. Polar Military Air Force

This air force is directly under the Red Army command. Although, in contrast to the attitude toward the GUMZ air force, the ~~USSR~~ <sup>USSR</sup> boasts about ~~its~~ <sup>the</sup> polar military air force, and constantly proclaims its existence, nevertheless, the secrecy surrounding the polar military air force is almost impenetrable. With proper reserve, we shall mention, however, that in 1945 the Soviet polar military air force was subdivided into three military ~~regions~~ <sup>districts</sup> (Ural-Ob', Taymyr, Kolyma-Dal'stroy), that it had 40 to 50 air brigades, 3 divisions, and 6 brigades of airborne troops, 10 "experimental brigades" (eksperimental'naya brigada), and about 2,000 aircraft.

For 1945 these figures seem to be grossly exaggerated.

There is no information available on the Soviet polar military air force in the European part of the Great North.

The location of a few bases in Asia is known; there is also some information on the numerical strength of the brigades and on some work carried out by the military air force.

Following are a few known bases:

- |                    |  |
|--------------------|--|
| 1. Novyy Port      | 10. Bolkakach [sic]  |
| 2. Tazovskoye      | 11. Port Tiksi   |
| 3. Kurgan          | 12. Bol'shoy Ostrov Lyakhov [Bol'shoy Ostrov, Lyakhov Islands] |
| 4. Port Dickson    | 13. Makiska [sic]  |
| 5. Severovo        | 14. Balagan  |
| 6. near Taymyrsk   | 15. Vrangeli Island  |
| 7. Cape Chelyuskin | 16. Olenok   |
| 8. Nordwick        | 17. Zyryanka   |
| 9. Khatanga        | 18. 50 km from Anadyr, along the River                         |

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Following now are a few polar military air force bases:

1. At the head of the bay located at the southernmost point of October Revolution Island (Ostrov Oktyabr'skaya Revolyutsiya)
2. On the central part of the eastern shore of the Lake Taymyr
3. Gorallyy (south of the Taymyr peninsula)
4. Nyurkinsk (in Yakutia, on one of the Lena tributaries)
5. Pechvalnoye [sic] (on the upper Indigirka) [Pekhval'noye on the middle Indigirka?]

There were about 50 military aircraft in Novyy Port in July 1946, some 20 heavy four-engine bombers, and 30 fighters of an unknown type. This information confirms the report of the presence of two air force brigades in Novyy Port during the same period.

During this period, there were 250 aircraft in Port Dickson, only about 100 of which were military aircraft. Half of these latter aircraft were obsolete. In Port Dickson there were also an airborne and a paratrooper brigade.

Kur'an was in 1946 the center of the Siberia-Northeastern Air Military District. Fifty military transport aircraft were reported there, and 20 ultra-modern fighters. Jet aircraft were tested there.

Upon request of the Red Air Force commander, some very important construction works were carried out, and probably still are, with manpower supplied by the GUMZ. In 1946 these works were carried out in the following places:

Tazovskoye, Port Dickson, Severovo, Khatanga, Ambarchik, Bol'shoy, Ostrov Lyakhov [sic, probably Bol'shoy Ostrov, Lyakhov Island], and in the areas of the Obskaya Guba (Ob' Bay) and of the northern part of the Taymyr peninsula.

Numerous experiments are carried out in the Taymyr peninsula with flying bombs. The center of these experiments seems to be the shore of Lake Taymyr.

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German aviators were seen on several occasions with Soviet air officers, particularly, as has been already stated, in Tazovskoye (where there are also other military installations), in Novyy Port, and in Khatanga. The number of German specialists employed by the polar military aviation (and quite decently treated) was in 1946 estimated at 10,000.

In 1946, Soviet military aviators had about 300,000 hours of flying time; this figure must be doubled for every year up to 1950, by which time the Red Air Force of the Arctic must be an invincible force at the service of the Soviet fatherland.

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